

Maine Yankee

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September 19, 2001
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RECEIVED

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Ms. Carol Hanlon
U.S. Department of Energy
Yucca Mountain Site Characterization Office (M/S #025)
P.O. Box 30307, North Las Vegas, Nevada
89036-0307

- References:
- (a) Federal Register /Vol. 66, No. 169/Thursday, August 30, 2001/Notices
 - (b) Letter: S. Kraft, Nuclear Energy Institute, to C. Hanlon, USDOE; "Nuclear Energy Institute comments on the Possible Site Recommendation for Yucca Mountain"; September 2001.

Subject: Maine Yankee Comments on the Possible Site Recommendation for Yucca Mountain

Dear Ms. Hanlon:

Maine Yankee is an NRC licensed commercial nuclear power plant currently being decommissioned. As such the establishment of a permanent geological repository for spent nuclear fuel and Greater Than Class C Waste (GTCC) is not a philosophical but a very real concern to Maine Yankee. The lack of such a facility such as Yucca Mountain is costing Maine Yankee and the electric rate payers of all the New England States tens of millions of dollars. This expense is above and beyond the DOE assessment for a permanent repository on each kilowatt hour produced during Maine Yankee's operating lifetime.

Maine Yankee's ISFSI will be placed in operation within the next few months requiring a continued operating expense outlay until the Department of Energy removes the spent fuel and GTCC from the Maine Yankee site. Consequently a timely resolution of the permanent storage of spent fuel and GTCC by the Department of Energy is essential to the successful decommissioning of Maine Yankee in a safe and cost effective manner.

Reference (a) asked for comments on the possible recommendation by the Secretary of Energy to the President regarding the Yucca Mountain. Maine Yankee agrees in general with and endorses the comments of the Nuclear Energy Institute forwarded to you in Reference (b). Unfortunately Maine Yankee believes that the tone of the NEI comments, reflecting the position of the 103 operating commercial nuclear power plants, does not adequately convey the sense of urgency felt by the more than half dozen single unit facilities undergoing decommissioning. ⁽¹⁾

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In reference (a), the Department of Energy asked the public to comment on several questions among them the following:

If you believe that the Secretary should not proceed with a recommendation.....what mechanism should be utilized to meet the Department's legal obligation to begin accepting spent nuclear fuel and high level radioactive waste?

If you believe that the Secretary should not proceed with a recommendation.....what measures should the Nation consider for assuring safe disposal of spent nuclear fuel and high level radioactive waste?

We appreciate that the Department is seeking the input of the public on these issues. However, Maine Yankee suggests that, in the event, the Secretary does not make a recommendation to the President, or that the recommendation is a negative one regarding Yucca Mountain, it would be the responsibility of the Secretary to the American People to provide answers to both of the above questions.

In light of the events of September 11, 2001, the safe disposal of spent nuclear fuel and GTCC has taken on a new urgency. Regardless of the Secretary's recommendation on the use of the Yucca Mountain site, the Department of Energy should locate and construct an interim facility on an expedited basis.

Maine Yankee again emphasizes that the resolution of the safe disposal of spent nuclear fuel and GTCC is today's issue for facilities undergoing decommissioning. The ratepayers of Maine and the other five New England States should not continue to be penalized for the continued delays in the resolution of these issues.

Very truly yours,



Thomas L. Williamson, Director
Nuclear Safety and Regulatory Affairs

cc: P. Craighead
P. Dostie
C. Miller
Deputy Director, SFPO, USNRC
S. O'Connor

Notes: (1) Maine Yankee is aware that the Haddam Neck, Yankee Rowe, Trojan, Big Rock Point, and Rancho Seco facilities, in addition to Maine Yankee, have all been required to plan and/or build ISFSI's to support their ongoing decommissioning work.

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